

[From National Review, January 03, 2005]
STANDING ATHWART HISTORY, YELLING STOP
(By William F. Buckley, Jr.)

There is, we like to think, solid reason for rejoicing. Prodigious efforts, by many people, are responsible for National Review. But since it will be the policy of this magazine to reject the hypodermic approach to world affairs, we may as well start out at once, and admit that the joy is not unconfined.

Let's face it: Unlike Vienna, it seems altogether possible that did National Review not exist, no one would have invented it. The launching of a conservative weekly journal of opinion in a country widely assumed to be a bastion of conservatism at first glance looks like a work of supererogation, rather like publishing a royalist weekly within the walls of Buckingham Palace. It is not that, of course; if National Review is superfluous, it is so for very different reasons: It stands athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it.

National Review is out of place, in the sense that the United Nations and the League of Women Voters and the New York Times and Henry Steele Commager are in place. It is out of place because, in its maturity, literate America rejected conservatism in favor of radical social experimentation. Instead of covetously consolidating its premises, the United States seems tormented by its tradition of fixed postulates having to do with the meaning of existence, with the relationship of the state to the individual, of the individual to his neighbor, so clearly enunciated in the enabling documents of our Republic.

"I happen to prefer champagne to ditchwater," said the benign old wrecker of the ordered society, Oliver Wendell Holmes, "but there is no reason to suppose that the cosmos does." We have come around to Mr. Holmes' view, so much that we feel gentlemanly doubts when asserting the superiority of capitalism to socialism, of republicanism to centralism, of champagne to ditchwater—of anything to anything. (How curious that one of the doubts one is not permitted is whether, at the margin, Mr. Holmes was a useful citizen!) The inroads that relativism has made on the American soul are not so easily evident. One must recently have lived on or close to a college campus to have a vivid intimation of what has happened. It is there that we see how a number of energetic social innovators, plugging their grand designs, succeeded over the years in capturing the liberal intellectual imagination. And since ideas rule the world, the ideologues, having won over the intellectual class, simply walked in and started to run things.

Run just about everything. There never was an age of conformity quite like this one, or a camaraderie quite like the Liberals'. Drop a little itching powder in Jimmy Wechsler's bath and before he has scratched himself for the third time, Arthur Schlesinger will have denounced you in a dozen books and speeches, Archibald MacLeish will have written ten heroic cantos about our age of terror. Harper's will have published them, and everyone in sight will have been nominated for a Freedom Award. Conservatives in this country—at least those who have not made their peace with the New Deal, and there is a serious question of whether there are others—are non-licensed nonconformists; and this is a dangerous business in a Liberal world, as every editor of this magazine can readily show by pointing to his scars. Radical conservatives in this country have an interesting time of it, for when they are not being suppressed or mutilated by Liberals, they are being ignored or humiliated by a great many of those of the well-fed Right,

whose ignorance and amorality of never been exaggerated for the same reason that one cannot exaggerate infinity.

There are, thank Heaven, the exceptions. There are those of generous impulse and a sincere desire to encourage a responsible dissent from the Liberal orthodoxy. And there are those who recognize that when all is said and done, the market place depends for a license to operate freely on the men who issue licenses—on the politicians. They recognize, therefore, that efficient getting and spending is itself impossible except in an atmosphere that encourages efficient getting and spending. And back of all political institutions there are moral and philosophical concepts, implicit or defined. Our political economy and our high-energy industry run on large, general principles, on ideas—not by day-to-day guess work, expedients and improvisations. Ideas have to go into exchange to become or remain operative; and the medium of such exchange is the printed word. A vigorous and incorruptible journal of conservative opinion is—dare we say it?—as necessary to better living as Chemistry.

We begin publishing, then, with a considerable stock of experience with the irresponsible Right, and a despair of the intransigence of the Liberals, who run this country; and all this in a world dominated by the jubilant single-mindedness of the practicing Communist, with his inside track to History. All this would not appear to augur well for National Review. Yet we start with a considerable—and considered—optimism.

After all, we crashed through. More than one hundred and twenty investors made this magazine possible, and over 50 men and women of small means invested less than one thousand dollars apiece in it. Two men and one woman, all three with overwhelming personal and public commitments, worked round the clock to make publication possible. A score of professional writers pledged their devoted attention to its needs, and hundreds of thoughtful men and women gave evidence that the appearance of such a journal as we have in mind would profoundly affect their lives.

Our own views, as expressed in a memorandum drafted a year ago, and directed to our investors, are set forth in an adjacent column. We have nothing to offer but the best that is in us. That, a thousand Liberals who read this sentiment will say with relief, is clearly not enough! It isn't enough. But it is at this point that we steal the march. For we offer, besides ourselves, a position that has not grown old under the weight of a gigantic, parasitic bureaucracy, a position untempered by the doctoral dissertations of a generation of Ph.D.'s in social architecture, unattenuated by a thousand vulgar promises to a thousand different pressure groups uncorroded by a cynical contempt for human freedom. And that, ladies and gentlemen, leaves us just about the hottest thing in town.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 18, 2005

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, September 11, 2005, I was unable to vote on the motion to approve the journal (rollcall No. 521); the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 457, Recognizing the importance and positive contributions of chemistry to our everyday lives and supporting the goals and ideals of National Chemistry Week (rollcall

No. 522); and the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 491, Expressing the sense of the House with respect to raising awareness and enhancing the state of computer security in the U.S. and supporting the goals of National Cyber Security Awareness Month (rollcall No. 523). Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all three measures.

COMMEMORATING SPINA BIFIDA MONTH

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 18, 2005

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate National Spina Bifida Awareness Month and to pay tribute to the more than 250,000 Americans in the Spina Bifida Community. There are an estimated 70,000 people in the United States who are currently living with Spina Bifida, the most common permanently disabling birth defect.

The Spina Bifida Association of America (SBAA) is an organization that has helped those affected by this debilitating disease for over 30 years and is the Nation's only organization solely dedicated to advocating on behalf of the Spina Bifida community. With almost 60 chapters in more than 125 communities, the SBAA brings families together to answer questions, voice concerns, and lend support to one another.

Together the SBAA and various local SBA Florida chapters work tirelessly to help the families of those living with Spina Bifida meet the challenges and enjoy the rewards of raising their children. I would like to thank the local chapters of SBAA in my State of Florida for all they have done and all that they will continue to do. The chapters in my State are a partner in the SB Hurricane Emergency Life Support Program established by the SBAA to distribute vitally needed supplies and assistance to Spina Bifida victims of the hurricanes in the Gulf Coast.

The exact cause of Spina Bifida is not known, but research has shown that if a woman takes 400 mcg of folic acid every day before she becomes pregnant, she reduces her risk of having a baby with Spina Bifida or another neural tube defect by as much as 70%. Although the exact cause remains unknown, genetics and environment are believed to play a role. Spina Bifida is a neural tube defect that happens in the first month of pregnancy when the spinal column doesn't close completely. Every day, an average of 8 babies are affected by Spina Bifida or a similar birth defect of the brain and spine, contributing to the 3,000 babies born annually with the disease.

With proper medical and family care people affected by Spina Bifida can live productive lives with the help of braces and/or a wheelchair. The key to a better life for Americans who live with Spina Bifida is research. Our goals are to develop new mechanisms for treatment, understanding and the prevention of Spina Bifida.

I am proud to be a member of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus and hope that all of my colleagues will join me in working to